

Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea Ministerial Conference
13-15 November 2006 - Cotonou, Benin
Outline for Draft Communiqué and Action Plan

Draft Framework for Communiqué

A. Background

Ministerial-level representatives are expected to adopt (and possibly sign) a communiqué committing their respective countries to sustainable improvements in the maritime domain during the conference on Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea (MSS-GoG) — scheduled for 13th to 15th November 2006 in Benin. The commitments in the communiqué will be linked to specific, time-bound actions, which will be supported by a broad range of stakeholders.

The communiqué would serve 3 main purposes: first, as a documented summary of sub-regional commitments; second, as a yardstick against which regional governments and stakeholders could measure progress; and, third, as a reference tool for strategy development. The main objectives of the MSS-GoG Ministerial communiqué are to:

- i. Clearly articulate sub-regional agreement on threats to maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea.
- ii. Forge high-level consensus and political buy-in for Plan of Action.
- iii. Identify and support time-bound measures for improved maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea.
- iv. Promote regional collaboration and coordinate the active participation of relevant regional institutions.
- v. Provide a justification and mechanism for coordinated and collaborative international assistance.

A draft outline for the communiqué and a framework for the implementation matrix follow.

B. Outline of the Communiqué

PREAMBLE

This introductory section will:

- ❑ Emphasize regional consensus regarding main MSS threats and vulnerabilities.
- ❑ Recognize the relationships between security, stability and economic development prospects.
- ❑ Highlight relationships between the attainment of improved management of maritime resources and Millennium Development Goals.
- ❑ Describe political commitment to take concrete steps to adopt and implement comprehensive national and regional strategies.

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I. ESTABLISH AND FACILITATE POLITICAL WILL

This section will:

- ❑ Discuss the importance of informed and unwavering political will in the success of maritime safety and security strategies.
- ❑ Promote effective inter-agency collaboration.

II. IMPROVING MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS

This section will:

- ❑ Emphasize the importance of an appropriate information management system that would promote information sharing, and facilitate analysis.
- ❑ Define Maritime Domain Awareness as part of comprehensive national and regional maritime strategies.
- ❑ Outline importance of installing internationally-recognized surveillance systems (such as the Automatic Identification System) and discuss how such systems complement the broader strategy.

III. STRENGTHEN REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

This section will:

- ❑ Discuss the importance of a robust legislative framework, consistent with international standards (ratification of ISPS codes).
- ❑ Emphasize that good legislation needs to be bolstered by a capacity to enforce (apprehending, prosecuting and punishing criminals).
- ❑ Discuss the importance of harmonizing legislation in the GoG.

IV. ENHANCE REGIONAL COORDINATION

This section will:

- ❑ Highlight the potential benefits of regional coordination (e.g. economies of scale, and the collaborative nature of effective MSS)
- ❑ Identify ways that regional organizations could foster effective regional coordination.
- ❑ Stress the importance of strong and effective regional institutions.
- ❑ Disseminate best practices that enhance maritime safety and security.

V. RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

This section will:

- ❑ Discuss the importance of public awareness in ensuring regional buy-in/ownership.
- ❑ Identify elements of successful media strategy.

VI. INVOLVING PARTNERS

This section will:

- ❑ Highlight the potential contributions of bilateral partners, multilateral organizations, non-governmental agencies, and civil society.
- ❑ Identify mechanisms for including partners in national and regional maritime strategy development and implementation.

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CONCLUSION

This concluding section will:

- ❑ Reiterate strong political commitment for enhanced maritime safety and security in the sub-region.
- ❑ Commit all GoG states to successfully implementing the measures laid out in the appended matrix in a timely manner.
- ❑ Express GoG resolve to monitor progress and reconvene periodically at both technical and policy-maker levels.